

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01957 070942Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T BEIRUT 1957

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLO LE IS UN MOPS
SUBJ: SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 1918

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON APRIL 6, RELIABLE
UN OFFICER JUST RETURNED FROM MARJAYUN AND BINT JBAIL
AREAS SAID THE FOLLOWING:

2. UN OFFICERS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT NEITHER ERSKINE
NOR SIILASVUO WERE PULLING THEIR WEIGHT IN LEBANON.
THEY WERE OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE SITUATION, SPENT
ALMOST NO TIME IN THE COUNTRY, AND GAVE NO DIRECTION
FROM THE TOP.

3. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL ISRAELI

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WITHDRAWAL IN EITHER MARJAYUN OR BINT JBAIL AREAS,
ALTHOUGH ISRAELIS WERE ROTATING TROOPS. (ILMAC
CHAIRMAN ESPINASSY ON APRIL 5 ALSO TOLD EMBOFF
THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL ISRAELI WITH-
DRAWAL. SEE REFTEL). THE ISRAELIS WERE DIGGING
IN AND BUILDING NUMEROUS NEW ROADS INTO SOUTH LEBANON.
IDF BATTERIES NEAR AL KHIYAM FIRED AT LEAST TWENTY

ROUNDS NORTH ON THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF APRIL 4.

4. DURING MARCH INVASION, IDF CAUSED SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE IN FOLLOWING TOWNS WHICH WERE VIRTUALLY UNSCATHED BEFORE INCURSION.

MARUN AR RA'S; (ALMOST TOTALLY DESTROYED)

GHANDURIYAH; (ALMOST TOTALLY DESTROYED)

QANTARAH.

IDF HAD ALSO CAUSED SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE TO FOLLOWING CITIES, IN ADDITION TO DAMAGE THEY HAD SUFFERED BEFORE THE INVASION:

AT TAYYIBAH;

MARKABA;

AL KHIYAM.

5. CHRISTIAN MILITIA WERE DOING NOTHING MILITARILY. SA'D HADDAD WAS TRYING TO RECRUIT MEN FOR HIS ARMY OF THE SOUTH, BUT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE HIS SUCCESS SO FAR. HADDAD PROBABLY COMMANDED
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SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 500 AND 1,000 MEN. KIBBUTZNIKS WERE NOW MAKING TOURIST TRIPS INTO SOUTH LEBANON. THEY OFTEN CARRIED AWAY GOODS FROM ABANDONED VILLAGES.

6. CHRISTIANS ROUTINELY MOVED THEIR TANKS TO ISRAEL FOR REPAIR. ON APRIL 4 SOURCE SAW THREE CHRISTIAN TANKS OF FRENCH MANUFACTURE NEAR AL KHIRBAH AND A CHRISTIAN SUPER SHERMAN TANK JUST INSIDE ISRAELI BORDER AT METULLA. ON APRIL 5 SOURCE SAW TWO CHRISTIAN SUPER SHERMAN TANKS NEAR BINT JBAIL.

7. ALMOST ALL ILMAC OFFICERS WERE NOW PERFORMING UNIFIL FUNCTIONS. SOURCE SAID THE LEBANESE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WAS OFFENDED BY THIS DE-FACTO DISMANTLING OF ILMAC WITHOUT CONSULTING GOL. LEBANESE REPORTEDLY SENT LIAISON OFFICER TO NAQURA, BUT SOURCE SAID THAT OFFICER WAS NOWHERE IN EVIDENCE ON APRIL 6. IN ANY EVENT, A STAFF, NOT ONE MAN, WAS NEEDED TO DO THE JOB.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

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